

Naturalists "homeless"



De'Lana Northbird and Ann Aitken, both of Cass Lake, are the 2012 Naturalists at the Norway Beach Campground this summer.

Photo by Allan Olson.

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The July 2 straight line wind storm that ravaged the Cass Lake area, blowing trees down on top of everything and leaving hundreds of area residents without power or even clear routes to town to get basic supplies, also left the two Norway Beach 2012 Chippewa National Forest Naturalists without a home for their summer programs.

As an alternative, the two naturalists – Ann Aitken and De'Lana Northbird – will be bringing their programs a little closer to town. It will be perhaps not the most ideal environment for a "naturalist" program, but you can bet these two young ladies will apply their creative minds to still make it a great program.

In its wake, the windstorm devastated the popular Norway Beach campground and left hundreds of trees uprooted, broken and snapped. The storm did, however, leave the park's Visitor Center intact, along with the beachside pavilions.

The optimistic spirits of the two naturalists were also not dampened for long, either. "At least we still have a job!" they said.

Their programs will now be offered at 4 p.m. at the Cass Lake Community Library.

On Thursday, July 19, they will host "Fact or Fiction – Paul Bunyan." Did you ever wonder how Paul found Babe, the blue ox? Attend this program and find the answer.

On Thursday, August 2, attend their Wildlife Scavenger Hunt; it will be a chance to track down the critters that might be hiding at the library.

The next day, on Friday, August 3, Ann Aitken will share her musical talents with everyone who attends. Hear her play tunes on a variety of

instruments, from the cedar flute to the ukelele.

On Thursday, August 9, join the Chippewa National Forest staff as they celebrate Smokey the Bear's birthday party bash at 11 a.m. This will be held at the Forest Supervisors Office in Cass Lake – the big log building on the west side of Highway 371.

The following day (Friday, August 10) at 4 p.m. they will hold a storytelling session and read about some of their favorite critters.

With only two programs left on the summer, the agenda for August 16 remains a surprise, to be determined by the naturalists.

The final program of the summer will be held on Friday August 17, titled "Waawaaskashii!" White Tailed Deer are everywhere you look up north, but what do we know about their summer world?

The same storm also closed the South Pike Bay Loop Campground, along with the Winnie Campground and Picnic area, including Forest Road 2168 (Winnie Campground Road); the Tamarack Campground; the Mi-gi-zi Bike Trail starting at the junction of US Highway 2, and Pike Bay Loop Road (FR 2137) (north end) and ending at the junction of 61st Ave NW and Pike Bay Loop Road (Southwest end); and the Soo Line Trail, starting at the Junction of US Highway 2 and the Pike Bay Loop Road (FR 2137) heading East and ending at the Junction with County Road 8, North of Federal Dam.

For more information on the summer programs or other information about the National Forest, please call the Chippewa National Forest office at 218-335-8600.